

Somewhere In Our Vaults A Few Anniversary Medals Remain

THE YEAR 1966 was a big year for the ANA, it was our diamond anniversary and plans to match the occasion had been programmed years in advance. Paramount was an official medal to mark the event—a medal authorized by an Act of Congress and struck by the United States Mint at Philadelphia.

To fully appreciate the behind-the-scenes activities that led to the final design of the ANA's 75th Anniversary Medal and to let our readers in on the fact that several unsold specimens remain in the vaults at the Colorado Springs headquarters and are available at the original issue price of \$5.00 each, we take you back a few years.

According to Arthur Sipe, then first vice president, (*The Numismatist*, October 1966), the idea of a medal to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of this association was discussed by many members, as well as by the ANA medals committee, early in 1965. A resolution was adopted by the ANA board of governors prior to the convention in Houston in 1965 to the effect that P. K. Anderson, then president, appoint a committee to prepare or have prepared designs for the proposed medal, with such designs to be presented to the board at the Houston convention.

A sum of \$500 was appropriated for the committee to carry out its assignment. Thus began the work of designing, selecting, approving and ultimately striking the ANA Diamond Jubilee medal.

During the close of the Middle Atlantic Numismatic Association's convention later that fall in Richmond, Virginia, Miss Eva Adams, director of the Mint; the late S. W. Freeman, chairman of the Washington Legislative Committee; and Matt H. Rothert, now president of ANA, agreed to petition the United States Congress for a congressional medal. Through their efforts a petition was presented to Senator John L. McClellan, Democrat of Arkansas, and Congressman Wilbur Mills of the same state. The proper bills were then

instituted and presented to both bodies of Congress.

In the meantime, the ANA board of governors and its medal committee were busy discussing suggested ideas for the design and intended representational objectives. Although the suggestions concerning the general theme were many sided, the decision was soon finalized.

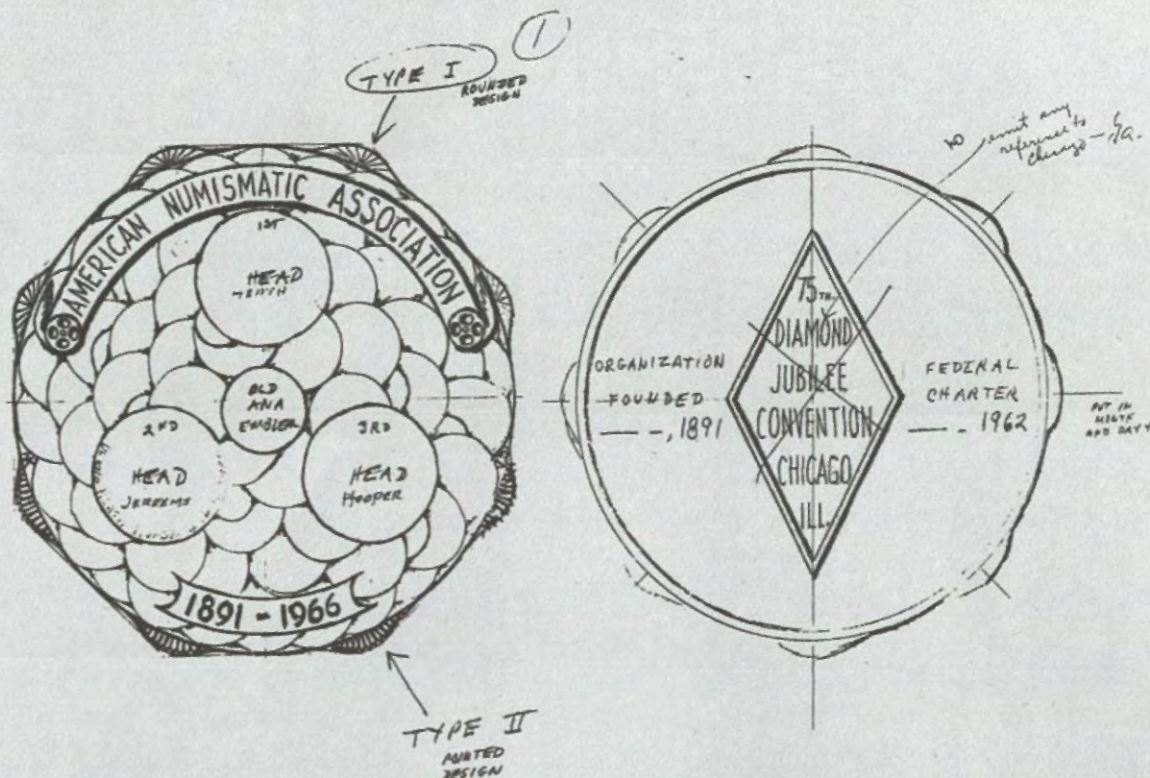
In a letter to Mrs. Margo Russell, well-known editor of *Coin World*, Arthur Sipe explained the principal theme for the medal and the reasons for the selection, "As our Congressional medal commemorates our diamond jubilee, it also reveres the efforts of three men who were instrumental in starting this association, which was founded on the solid principles of mutual aid and understanding.

"The first issue of *The Numismatist*, founded and conceived by Dr. George F. Heath, contained informative articles concerning our mutual hobby. William Jerrems, our first president, helped organize the new hobby group and Joseph Hooper, the first vice president, gave us a direction and a vision in the ANA seal.

"The seal contains the book of ancient history and the lamp of knowledge which symbolized the aims of the association seventy-five years ago and still points the way into the future—the way of service to our fellow numismatists through knowledge and better understanding."

It was with this idea and purpose in mind that Eva Adams instructed Michael Sura, superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, to begin work on the designs. Included in her letter of April 8, 1966, were photographs of Heath, Jerrems and Hooper for visual reference.

Shortly thereafter, on April 16, 1966,



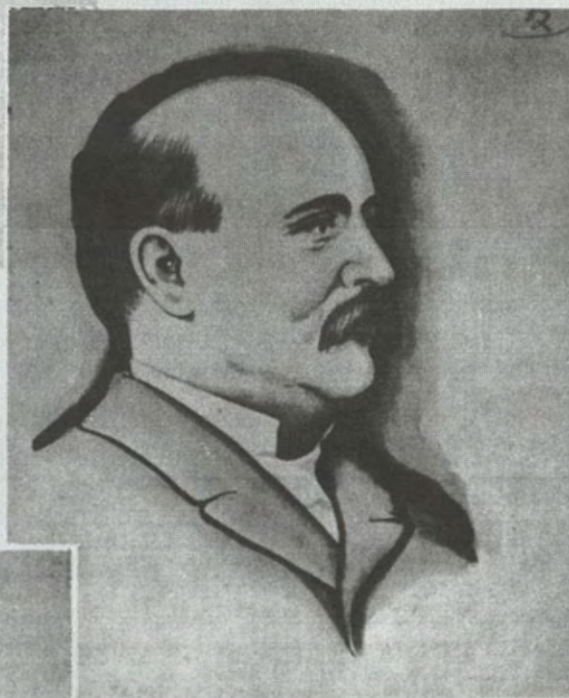
Obverse and reverse sketches by Vernon Sheldon along with his original notations for possible variations.



Frank Gasparro's obverse and reverse was selected two months before the convention as the official design to be carried on the ANA 75th Anniversary medal.



William Jerrems



Dr. George F. Heath



Joseph F. Hooper

These wash drawings served as the models for the obverse portraits on the anniversary medal. All were prepared by Frank Gasparro.



Two additional reverse suggestions by Frank Gasparro featured the still to be built ANA headquarters in Colorado Springs.

the bill providing for the striking of medals in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the American Numismatic Association became Public Law. Signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on that same day, the bill reads in part, "The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized and directed to strike and furnish to the American Numismatic Association not more than fifty thousand medals with suitable emblems, devices and inscriptions to be determined by the American Numismatic Association subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury.

Aside from the board's acceptance and approval of a final design, the size of the medal also had to be considered and agreed upon. A majority of the members felt that a 2½" medal would be appropriate. However, the mint *already* had a quantity of three-inch planchets, the same ones used for the U.S. Presidential medal series, and by making use of these the production problems would be eased.

THE FIRST DESIGNS

It was not long afterwards that the first of the medal design sketches were received by the board. Credited with the first four sketches was former president, Vernon Sheldon. A medals committee member himself, Mr. Sheldon's obverse design was done in montage and consisted of ANA medals and badges surmounted by three portraits with the center

being the ANA's first seal and ribbon name plateaus above and below the portraits. The general idea was to produce an allegorical representation of the inherent characteristics of a viable and going places ANA. Further designs were then submitted by mint engravers Frank Gasparro, Philip E. Fowler, Edgar Z. Steever and Michael G. Iacocca for consideration.

Via a mail vote circulated by President Rothert, the board and the medals committee began their unenviable task of deciding on both the preferred design and the size of the medal that would be ultimately issued. With the August convention in Chicago drawing steadily near, the time element limited their voting deadline to May 31, 1966. But, agreement was finally reached before that date and the board of governors selected the obverse showing portraits of Dr. G. F. Heath, founder; W. Jerrems, first president; and J. Hooper, first vice president; with the legend, "Diamond Jubilee 1891-1966," and above the dates, "A.N.A. Chartered by Congress—1912."

The reverse sketch chosen depicted the first ANA seal as designed by Col. Hooper with the legends, "American Numismatic Association Orgd. 1891 and In Commemoration of the Seventy Fifth Anniversary—By Act of Congress April 16, 1966." Artist for both of the designs submitted was Frank Gasparro, named just the year before chief engraver of the Mint. Also



This suggested obverse by Edgar Z. Steever bore fair resemblance to the accepted design of his mentor, Frank Gasparro.



Two different reverses were proposed by Steever. In presenting the drawing on the left, Steever felt that more emphasis should be placed on coin collecting. His design to the right showed the seal surrounded by a field of diamonds.

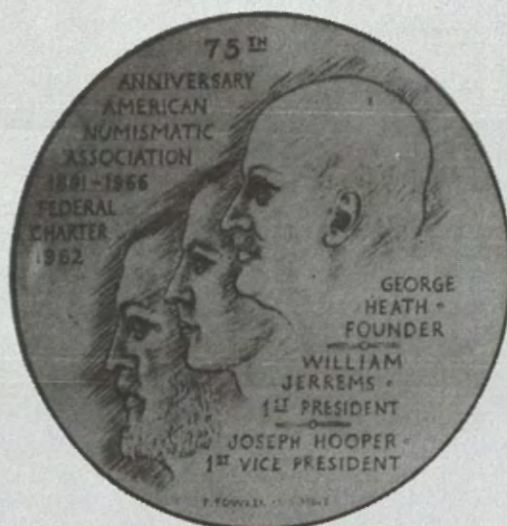
unanimously approved by mail vote was the three-inch medal size to be used for striking.

Time was now of the essence and an initial order of 3,000 medals was consigned for the rapidly approaching Diamond Jubilee convention, beginning August 15, 1966, in Chicago. On June 23, the Commission of Fine Arts approved the designs, and with less than two months of actual work time, Frank Gas-

parro prepared for the tedious sculpting and engraving which lay ahead of him.

In a letter later written to Ed Rochette, editor of *The Numismatist*, Frank Gasparro explains his work on the medal and the urgency of its immediate completion. "I proceeded to hastily prepare my plaster models—time was short.

"The order was to ship 3000 medals to Chicago for the ANA convention starting August 15, 1966. I completed the obverse



Philip Fowler's first submission, both obverse and reverse, kept well within the suggested ideas of the board of governors—the three founders on the obverse and the seal on the reverse.



Michael Iacocca's obverse design strongly emphasized the Diamond Jubilee theme. His reverse turned primarily to ancient coins with the ANA seal as the focal point.

plaster July 15. In working up the portraits, I found Dr. Heath and J. Hooper easy to shape up. As for Jerrems, the portrait proved more difficult since the features proved to be too symmetrical and too well shaped to give off some discernable characteristic line or markings; in other words, a handsome portrait is hard to execute.

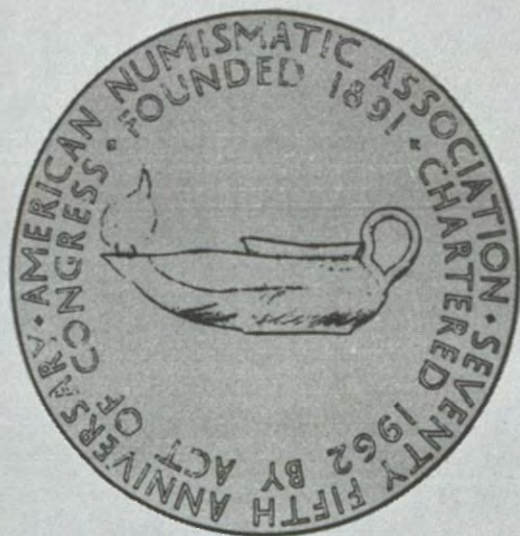
"However, all went well and we proceeded to make working patterns for our Janvier reducing lathes. The result was working hubs—from these we struck 3" diameter working dies. These were hardened and medals were struck from these dies by July 25, 1966. The medals were packed and shipped by August 5."*

The medals were received at the con-

*It should be noted that the reverse design of the ANA medal was completed with the valuable assistance of Edgar Z. Steever, also on the mint staff.



Two fresh approaches by Philip Fowler are presented here: to the left, the ancient striking of coinage is suggested here as a symbol for numismatics; to the right, Mercury, messenger of the gods, god of wealth, and inventor of weights and measures, is suggested as a fresh symbol for numismatics.



Fowler suggested an actual antique lamp here to symbolize the quest for knowledge, the finest purpose of the ANA. This reverse was suggested for use with either of his two original and unique obverses shown above.

vention hotel on August 15 within minutes before the convention was officially opened to the public.

Finishing under the pressure of such a close deadline, Frank Gasparro's artistic and technical efforts were in the hands of ANA members at their Diamond Jubilee convention.

The board's faith in Frank Gasparro was well rewarded. Working against time, he produced for the association a masterpiece of medallion art. The medals were so

well received that soon an additional order for 1,000 more was placed with the mint. A total of 4,000 were struck and today, in the vaults of the ANA headquarters, there remains the small unsold portion of these medals. Putting just a few aside for posterity, the association will sell these remaining medals at the issue price of \$5.00 each, postpaid, to members writing on a first come, first serve basis. Do hurry. The address is ANA 75th Anniversary Medal, P.O. Box 2366, Colorado Springs, Co. 80901.—NILS WIKNER